IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 5, 12 and 13 and ADD new claim 14 in accordance with the following:

1-4. (cancelled)

5. (currently amended) A method for visual display unit-based definition and parameterization of a software interface of a software component of a function block of a software application of an industrial automation system, the software interface having at least one interface parameter that has at least one editable attribute, wherein at least one interface parameter has a bi-unique designation corresponding to the function block and a hierarchical structure, the method comprising:

combining function blocks in a common branch to form combined functions having respective branches, wherein each end of the respective branches forms an interface appertaining to a block represented by a respective branch, enabling selection of arbitrary interfaces;

providing a display window which can be divided vertically or horizontally;

displaying in a first partial window of the display window the hierarchical structure of the at least one interface parameter and the function block of the bi-unique designation of the software component of ~~a~~ the software application of the industrial automation system;

selecting one interface parameter and the hierarchical structure using a movable cursor; and

displaying in a second partial window of the display window a detailed display of the selected interface parameter, the detail display including a display of at least one editable attribute of the selected interface parameter and allowing the editable attribute to be defined and parameterized within the hierarchical structure of the function block;

for each editable attribute of the at least one editable attribute, providing a name portion

and a data portion, the name portion being used to identify the editable attribute, the data portion being scrollable horizontally if a graphical representation of the data portion requires more space than a space offered by the display window, the graphical representation of the name portion being stationary; and

arranging the name portion and the data portion in horizontal rows, the horizontal rows being arranged one below another, wherein the position of the name portion is retained during horizontal scrolling.

6. (cancelled)

7. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5, further comprising:

arranging the name portion and the data portion in vertical columns, the vertical columns being arranged side by side.

8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5, further comprising:

dividing the data portion into columns or rows.

10. (previously presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein a sequence of the vertical columns is freely selected and stored by a user.

11. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein a sequence of the horizontal rows is freely selected and stored by a user.

12. (currently amended) A method for visual display unit-based definition and parameterization of a software interface of a software component of an industrial automation system, the software interface having at least one interface parameter that has at least one editable attribute, the method comprising:

<u>combining function blocks in a common branch to form combined functions having respective branches, wherein each end of the respective branches forms an interface appertaining to a block represented by a respective branch, enabling selection of arbitrary interfaces;</u>

providing a display window which can be divided vertically or horizontally;

displaying in a first partial window of the display window a hierarchical structure of the at least one interface parameter of the software component of the industrial automation system, wherein the at least one interface parameter determines use of a function block of the software interface;

selecting one interface parameter using a movable cursor;

displaying in a second partial window of the display window a detail display of the selected interface parameter, the detail display including a display of at least one editable attribute of the selected interface parameter and allowing the editable attribute to be defined and parameterized;

for each editable attribute of the at least one editable attribute, providing a name portion and a data portion, the name portion being used to identify the editable attribute, the data portion being scrollable horizontally if a graphical representation of the data portion requires more space than a space offered by the display window, the graphical representation of the name portion being stationary; and

arranging the name portion and the data portion in horizontal rows, the horizontal rows being arranged one below another, wherein the position of the name portion is retained during horizontal scrolling.

13. (currently amended) A software interface of a function block of a software application of an industrial automation system, the software interface having at least one interface parameter that has at least one editable attribute, wherein at least one interface parameter has a bi-unique designation corresponding to the function block and a hierarchical structure, the software interface comprising computer-readable instructions for performing:

combining function blocks in a common branch to form combined functions having respective branches, wherein each end of the respective branches forms an interface appertaining to a block represented by a respective branch, enabling selection of arbitrary interfaces;

providing a display window which can be divided vertically or horizontally;

displaying in a first partial window of the display window the hierarchical structure of the at least one interface parameter and the function block of the bi-unique designation of the software component of ~~a~~ the software application of the industrial automation system;

selecting one interface parameter and the hierarchical structure using a movable cursor; and

displaying in a second partial window of the display window a detailed display of the

selected interface parameter, the detail display including a display of at least one editable attribute of the selected interface parameter and allowing the editable attribute to be defined and parameterized within the hierarchical structure of the function block;

for each editable attribute of the at least one editable attribute, providing a name portion and a data portion, the name portion being used to identify the editable attribute, the data portion being scrollable horizontally if a graphical representation of the data portion requires more space than a space offered by the display window, the graphical representation of the name portion being stationary; and

arranging the name portion and the data portion in horizontal rows, the horizontal rows being arranged one below another, wherein the position of the name portion is retained during horizontal scrolling.

14. (new) A method for visual display unit-based definition and parameterization of a software interface of a software component of a function block of a software application of an industrial automation system, the software interface having at least one editable interface parameter that includes a bi-unique designation corresponding to the function block and a hierarchical structure, the method comprising:

combining function blocks in a common branch to form combined functions having respective branches, wherein each end of the respective branches forms an interface appertaining to a block represented by a respective branch, enabling selection of arbitrary interfaces;

providing a display window which can be divided vertically or horizontally;

displaying in a first partial window of the display window the hierarchical structure of the at least one editable interface parameter and the function block of the bi-unique designation of the software component of the software application of the industrial automation system; and

selecting and displaying one editable interface parameter of the function block and the hierarchical structure, wherein the editable interface has at least one editable attribute with a stationary name portion and a horizontally scrollable data portion.